



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Senator Carlucci Secures Critical Funding for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley to Help Domestic Violence Survivors

SENATOR CARLUCCI June 28, 2018

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



SPRING VALLEY, NY -- New York State Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) secured a \$70,000 grant through the New York State Legislature for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV). LSHV is the sole provider in the lower and mid-Hudson Valley offering comprehensive civil legal services to those that cannot afford an attorney in seven counties.

The \$70,000 grant secured by Senator Carlucci will enable LSHV to provide legal services for domestic violence survivors in Rockland County. LSHV works with survivors of domestic violence in civil legal proceedings in local family courts, including family offense, custody, visitation, child support and divorce proceedings. In 2017, LSHV attorneys handled 559 cases for residents of Rockland County, impacting approximately 1,218 household members. 28 percent of those cases were related to domestic violence and family law.

Speaking of the grant, Senator Carlucci said, “The important work that LSHV does can only continue with funding. Survivors and victims of domestic abuse come to LSHV perhaps with little hope, and LSHV does everything in their power to make a real difference in these people’s lives. This is why it is my honor to present them with this critical funding.”

LSHV’s CEO, Barbara Finkelstein, said “We truly could not do this important work without the partnership of leaders like Senator Carlucci. Thanks to this grant, hundreds of Rockland County individuals and families will receive critical legal assistance to keep them safe from domestic violence and abuse.”

Funding has been critical to the work LSHV has done to help 12-year-old Emma, who fled El Salvador last year after being stalked by gang members. Emma’s family feared she would be raped or killed if she did not become a gang member’s wife. Emma’s grandfather and uncle had been murdered by gang members. Seeking refuge, Emma made the dangerous journey to the U.S without any family members accompanying her. When she arrived, she faced removal proceedings. Rockland County’s Center for Safety and Change referred Emma’s mother to LSHV. There attorneys in the Spring Valley Office represented Emma in immigration court in New York City and were able to get her a grant of asylum, so she could remain in the U.S. indefinitely. LSHV has also assisted Emma with her application for Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR), which is currently pending.

LSHV's Domestic Violence Unit impacts not only the lives of the individual clients it serves, but the entire community they live in. For example, an abused mother may finally leave her abuser but have no financial resources or guarantee of safety, so she becomes homeless. Her children grow up in an environment that isn't stable, safe, or healthy, and often they will end up dropping out of school and reducing their chances to provide for themselves. The community carries the cost of feeding and sheltering the family. LSHV's advocacy can stop this cycle of damage before it starts, and therefore has an immeasurable impact on both the family itself and the larger community.

Founded in 1967, LSHV is the only provider in the Hudson Valley of free, comprehensive, legal services in civil matters (noncriminal) for individuals and families who cannot afford an attorney when their basic human needs are at stake. This includes urgent legal needs such as: domestic violence (orders of protection, child custody, etc.), housing emergencies (eviction and foreclosure prevention), healthcare, children's law and advocacy, disability and benefits, elder law, consumer fraud and more. In pursuit of this mission, LSHV maintains a staff of 136 individuals, including 82 attorneys and 27 paralegals working across nine offices throughout our service area.

For more information about Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, to volunteer, or contribute, please visit www.lshv.org, or contact Tom Gabriel, Chief Development Officer, at 914-949-1305 ext 160.